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hundred, and when the nomination is for an office to be filled wholly or in part by the voters of only a portion of the said city and county of New York or of the said city of Brooklyn, less than the whole, such number shall not be less than one hundred." Another of these amendments provides that in the city and county of New York municipal ballots shall contain the names of all candidates other than candidates for the offices of member of Congress, State Senator, and member of Assembly; while still another requires that sample ballots shall be printed and in possession of the county clerk seven days before the day of election, subject to public inspection, in order that mistakes, if any there are, may be discovered and corrected.

Those who are in any degree familiar with the bill will understand from what I have written just what its provisions now are. Whoever examines it critically and impartially must pronounce it to be a very complete and practical measure. I believe the great body of our people are anxious that it should be placed upon the statute-books. They earnestly hope that when it reaches the executive chamber it will not meet the same cruel fate which there befell its unfortunate predecessors.

CHARLES T. SAXTON.

IV.

WHAT AMERICANS READ.

IN a popular novel of the day, a visiting Englishman asks his American hostess, "Do Americans read?" The reply is: "They know how to read, but I never could see that the educated classes read."

It has been said that the trend of a man's thought can be learned by noticing what he reads, and again, that the index to one's real nature is found in the occupations which engage his leisure hours.

What does the average American read, morning and evening, on the train or ferry, by the fireside, at the breakfast- or dinner-table, in the office and counting-room, at the street corners and in public houses? What but daily papers, from Christmas to Easter, and from Easter to Christmas again? Every spare moment is filled with the perusal of papers of some kind. The breakfast-table becomes a silent hour for the family, so that the father may read the news of a great world, and an evening paper claims the later hours of the day. Opportunities for social intercourse, for the cultivation of home friendships, for the exercise of helpful, neighborly influences are all sacrificed at the feet of this huge, inexorable Juggernaut of Newspaper-Reading.

That a man of intelligence and enterprise should acquaint himself with leading current events in his own and foreign countries cannot be denied. It is equally necessary that he should be fully abreast of his own business interests. In a certain sense, a man cannot live successfully in the world and not be of it. If he would hold a place among men of affairs, he must be an integral part of their life, and to this end must be acquainted with the thoughts and events that are occupying the attention of other men. He must also be well informed in his own line of business and in all others which impinge upon it.

Neither is the usefulness of an excellent daily paper, one of the ably-edited publications which are found in our large cities, and of which we have a right to be proud, denied. On the contrary, its office is held in the highest esteem, and the public indebtedness to this faithful public servant can be best reckoned when we compare the present with ante-newspaper days. When used with judgment, its educational power is tremendous. But the grandest agencies may become perverted by abuse. One may well doubt whether the innumerable quick, alert, logical, practical men who devote one or two hours each day to the issues of the daily press are sufficiently compensated for the time so spent. The constant pouring into one's mental hopper of all the good, indifferent, and bad matter which is daily published in newspaper form weakens the mental powers, results in confusion of thought and weakness of memory, and induces a state of mental debility wherein a man loses the power to comprehend and the taste for the more substantial and enduring forms of literature.

Scores of items in the best papers, even, can be omitted from the daily reading without loss. Records of the court-room, startling accidents, gratuitous advertise-

ments of actors and actresses, petty gossip about prominent men and women obtained by interviewing their servants, stories of crime, disease, and death, benefit no one, and, did not the abnormal taste of their readers demand them, would not be published by the best papers.

A single daily, read in the morning or evening, according to one's desire, is sufficient for the mass of readers. That fire in Kansas, which the hoarse-voiced "extra" boys are crying through the streets, will be published with full details in the regular morning or evening paper. Save the time for some more inspiring occupation than the record of horrors of which one could easily afford to be ignorant. If a man steps aside from the ordinary course of his daily life, be the compelling cause a trip to Europe or a run of fever, and is thus forced to forego his usual newspaper reading, it is astonishing how little of real value has been lost. Men have taken each others' lives, been arrested, tried, and convicted; houses have been set on fire; numberless couples have been through the divorce courts; theatres have changed hands; ships have come and gone in the great harbor; stocks have risen and fallen; an epidemic has had its course in the South Sea islands; the King of Spain has been ill and recovered. None of these matters, the reading of which would have consumed hours of valuable time, has affected the human race in general to any noticeable extent.

That prolific and prosperous new-comer, the Sunday newspaper, displaces, to a greater degree than any other paper, by virtue of its size and time of sale, a far better element of mental training or culture than itself. It has a marked influence in detaching at home the weak-willed and intermittent church-goer; and—setting aside all the claims which religion and morality have to the consideration of every honest citizen, and considering only the mental and physical results—it can be said without fear of contradiction that an hour spent in the spiritual atmosphere of a church, listening to the expression of high and uplifting thoughts, affords surer means of inspiration to the better part of a man's nature than the same time devoted to careless, idle, aimless, and omnivorous reading of the interminable products of the Sunday newspaper.

One of the most mischievous results of the habit of immoderate newspaper-reading is the distaste thus acquired for connected, logical argument, and, in-general, for solid literature in any department. The reader becomes accustomed to snatching a paragraph here and there, giving a thought to politics, another to business, a third to the newest sensation in the social world; and so strong does the habit of superficial thought become that he no longer has strength to command his mental powers or the desire to read connectedly on any theme. Like the daughters of the horse-leech, his cry is "Give, give." Continual reading of periodical literature is like constant tasting of different sorts of food. The body is not nourished or strengthened, the digestive powers are weakened, and the appetite becomes capricious and unhealthy.

The consideration of what Americans read is, perhaps, of less importance than another—what Americans do not read. A few weeks ago there was riding in a city street-car an elderly gentleman of unusually fine appearance, the expression of whose face indicated a serene mind and noble living and thinking. A passenger's address revealed the fact that he was a physician, and, by his general appearance, he was a busy and prosperous one. He was evidently going from New York to one of the suburbs to attend a social gathering. No sooner was he seated in the car than he produced a small, vest-pocket edition of the "Essays of Elia," and that the genial meditations of that gentle philosopher were profoundly enjoyed was very evident from the benevolent expression which diffused itself over his face. Newsboys' cries of *Journal*, *Sun*, *Herald*, *Times*, and *Tribune* fell unheeded on his ear. The charm of that small volume held him closely throughout the hour's journey, freed him from any cares and anxieties that might belong to his professional life, and wrought an effect that no recital of general news could have brought about.

Many a busy man says: "I have not read a book through in five years. I have no time to read books." The probabilities are that neither has he read carefully a half-dozen important articles in one of our more solid magazines. Lack of time is

the ready excuse; but lack of inclination, resulting from careless reading habits, is very frequently the basis of the complaint. The large majority of American readers leave untouched the important volumes relating to the condition and government of our country; the critical views of thinking men on the exigencies of the Republic and the dangers that threaten the State. They thus reserve, until a period closely approaching a national crisis, that candid consideration of the great questions at issue which cannot be successfully entered into during the heat of a political contest. Unnoticed also are the excellent biographies which are so abundant. Attractive histories, powerful fiction, studies in political economy, the latest discoveries of the scientist, the development of art, and the upheaval and consequent progress in the religious world—all these are sealed treasures to the newspaper devotee.

Closed to him, moreover, are the riches of antiquity, the elegant pages of Virgil and Sophocles, the inspiring, rugged freshness of Æschylus and Homer, the simplicity of Chaucer, the thoughtful imagery of Milton. He eagerly drinks the lees, while the rich, sparkling wine is passed untasted.

The question becomes increasingly important with extended consideration. The citizens of the coming century are now being educated. The natural path of the son lies very close to that of his father. The exaggerated importance which so many attach to newspapers of the day will either decline or increase in the next generation. It has grown astonishingly within the past ten years; it is constantly increasing. Newspaper literature rarely stimulates thought and develops character. If the coming citizen is to be a well-balanced, thoughtful, strong man, his daily mental diet must consist of more substantial material than the ephemeral writings of the day.

Suppose that one-half of all the newsboys of New York were to be fitted out with clearly-printed vest-pocket editions of standard authors, which are now to be had at fabulously low prices, and to offer these for sale to the throng of weary workers on their way home from business. Perhaps a page of rich humor from Dickens, a stirring old border ballad from Scott, an inspiring page from the life of some self-made man, or a suggestive thought from one of Emerson's essays might be as interesting to the mind just released from the confinement in office or factory as the ordinary *pot-pourri* of the day's doings, and it would certainly be more elevating. Possibly the man who starts out for the day tired and dispirited with the hard struggle for existence would be as sensibly helped and fitted for his duties, if, having read the current news the evening before, he regaled himself with some of the choice thoughts of the great men of the world before the plunge into business life.

HELEN MARSHALL NORTH.

V.

WHY "MEMBER OF CONGRESS"?

WHY should a member of the House of Representatives be spoken of as a "Member of Congress"? It is a common custom; but is it certain that it is a good custom? Nothing can be plainer than that a member of the Senate is as much a member of Congress as a member of the lower house; yet a Senator is never so designated, and the absurdity of such a designation is patent. But is it not equally absurd to designate a Representative in this way?

The Constitution of the United States says that "the House of Representatives shall be composed of *members* chosen every second year," that "no person shall be a *Representative* who shall not have attained," etc., that "*Representatives* and direct taxes shall be apportioned," etc., that the "times, places, and manner of holding elections for Senators and *Representatives* shall be prescribed," etc., etc. It also says that "the Senate of the United States shall be composed of two *Senators* from each State," etc. There is nothing about "Members of Congress" in this venerable instrument except the statement quoted that "the House of Representatives shall be composed of *members*"; but the word "*members*" is here used in its ordinary acceptance, and surely no one can quote this expression as a justification of the common phrase, even though in the corresponding article relating to the Senate the word "*Senators*" (not "*members*") is employed.